

Assembly Bill No. 2413

CHAPTER 583

An act to add Chapter 12 (commencing with Section 49000) to Division 17 of, and to add and repeal Section 49003 of, the Food and Agricultural Code, relating to food and agriculture, and making an appropriation therefor.

[Approved by Governor September 26, 2014. Filed with
Secretary of State September 26, 2014.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2413, John A. Pérez. The Office of Farm to Fork.

Existing law establishes the Department of Food and Agriculture, which is tasked with, among other things, promoting and protecting the agricultural industry of the state, and seeking to enhance, protect, and perpetuate the ability of the private sector to produce food and fiber in a way that benefits the general welfare and economy of the state. Existing law also establishes the California Healthy Food Financing Initiative for the purpose of promoting healthy food access in the state.

This bill would create the Office of Farm to Fork within the department, and would require the office, to the extent that resources are available, to work with various entities, including, among others, the agricultural industry and other organizations involved in promoting food access, to increase the amount of agricultural products available to underserved communities and schools in the state. The bill would require the office to, among other things, identify urban and rural communities that lack access to healthy food, and to coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies to promote and increase awareness of programs that promote greater food access. The bill would create the Farm to Fork Account in the Department of Food and Agriculture Fund that would consist of money made available from federal, state, industry, and other sources, and would continuously appropriate the money deposited in the account without regard to fiscal years to carry out the purposes of the Office of Farm to Fork. By creating a continuously appropriated fund, the bill would make an appropriation. The bill, until January 1, 2020, would also require the department, in any year in which funds are received into or expended from the Farm to Fork Account, to submit to the Legislature an overview of the account's income and expenditures.

Appropriation: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 12 (commencing with Section 49000) is added to Division 17 of the Food and Agricultural Code, to read:

CHAPTER 12. OFFICE OF FARM TO FORK

49000. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) There are many Californians who lack adequate access to healthy food.

(b) The lack of access to healthy food falls disproportionately on disadvantaged urban and rural communities.

(c) These same communities also suffer from an increased rate of obesity, diabetes, and other chronic health conditions related to poor diet.

(d) Facilitating access to healthy food in these communities is needed to address the gaps in the food distribution system and help mitigate the health consequences of this inadequacy.

(e) There are many county, state, federal, and private organizations attempting to address this issue, but there is no state-level body charged with coordinating these activities.

(f) A state-level office, charged with coordinating and facilitating food access, can increase the effectiveness of ongoing programs and ensure that efforts and funding are not duplicated.

(g) The Department of Food and Agriculture is uniquely situated to administer this office because of the department's knowledge of the agricultural industry, and its ability to bring farmers together with hunger relief organizations, partner agencies, schools, colleges, community organizations, and others to increase the availability of healthy food.

49001. There is hereby created in the department the Office of Farm to Fork. To the extent that resources are available, this office shall work with the agricultural industry, direct marketing organizations, food policy councils, public health groups, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, academic institutions, district agricultural associations, county, state, and federal agencies, and other organizations involved in promoting food access to increase the amount of agricultural products available to underserved communities and schools in this state. The office, under the auspices of the department, shall do all of the following:

(a) Work with regional and statewide stakeholders to identify urban and rural communities that lack access to healthy food, determine current barriers to food access, and share information to encourage best practices.

(b) Coordinate with other local, state, and federal agencies to promote and increase awareness of programs that promote greater food access.

(c) Promote greater retail sale of healthy food in underserved communities, including promoting the acceptance of California Special Supplemental Nutritional Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and CalFresh benefits at certified farmers' markets, encouraging the

development and sustainability of local policies that support urban agriculture, increasing the number and quality of food retail outlets in inner city and rural communities, and maximizing resources in the interest of increasing food access.

(d) Foster partnerships between community partners, including farmers, businesses, and nonprofit and philanthropic organizations.

(e) Identify distribution barriers that affect limited food access, including, but not limited to, shortage of food retail outlets, limited store capacity, high distribution costs, and lack of capital funding opportunities, and work to overcome those barriers through the following:

(1) Encouraging food hubs or other aggregation systems.

(2) Coordinating institutional food procurement and buying practices.

(3) Increasing access to information, technical assistance, and resources, including developing opportunities through the California Healthy Food Financing Initiative (Article 3 (commencing with Section 104660) of Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 103 of the Health and Safety Code) in the office of the Treasurer.

(f) Identify opportunities and provide technical assistance for collaboration between farmers, regional and local food banks, partner agencies, and nonprofit charitable organizations in the gleaning, collection, and distribution of agricultural products for the purposes of reducing hunger and increasing access to healthy foods.

(g) Identify informational resources and organizations to provide technical assistance on small scale and backyard farming, community gardens, and other agricultural products for residents of underserved communities.

(h) Identify opportunities for collaboration with community organizations, social services, and partner agencies to provide cooking and nutrition education classes to residents of underserved communities.

(i) Coordinate with school districts and representatives to do the following:

(1) Provide tools to facilitate relationships between local producers and school food procurement personnel, and encourage opportunities to incorporate best purchasing practices such as Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification and insurance.

(2) Increase the nutritional profile of foods provided in schools.

(3) Increase access to nutrition education programs and information in schools.

49002. (a) There is hereby created the Farm to Fork Account in the Department of Food and Agriculture Fund that shall consist of money made available from federal, state, industry, philanthropic, and private sources.

(b) Notwithstanding Section 13340 of the Government Code, all money deposited in the Farm to Fork Account is hereby continuously appropriated to the department without regard to fiscal years to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

49003. (a) In any fiscal year in which funds are received into or expended from the Farm to Fork Account, the department, no later than

December 31 following the close of the fiscal year, shall submit to the Legislature an overview of the account's income and expenditures.

(b) A report to be submitted pursuant to this section shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

(c) Pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, this section is repealed on January 1, 2020.